



SEP 9 1970

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

SEP 1 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
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Dear Dr. Lederberg:

The POST has indicated your column would appear on Sundays instead of Saturdays, starting in July. Thus far I have seen only one article, that of July 19. What is happening?

Now, as to the queries in your last note:

(1) As far as I know, no one has published anything like Chauncey Starr's work or made a criticism of it. The work isn't rigorous and he knows it. But he believes it bears on an important question and if he can cause others to enter the field and do better, it would not displease him. Have you suggested a face-to-face chat with him?

Starr has indicated an interest in my book, has said he has gone through most of it. But being a very busy dean he doesn't have the time to do the kind of research required. So, be charitable and try to help if you can.

I asked the NAE to hold a conference on the subject of public risk taking but haven't kept up with their planning.

(2) I just don't know enough about the "health cost of nuclear energy" to offer a comment. It looks like a field worth studying. It is so easy to scare people with the statistics that careful studies should be quite valuable. But this sort of thing is outside my province for now.

TR:BUS

WJL:JLS

(3) Re. the SST: Here are two papers, one a memo by DoC, recently made public and the other my testimony sent (but not orally given) to the Senate committee.

Incidentally, I spent some time drawing tree diagrams for the decision processes being applied to the SST and concluded (see page 331 of my text) that $p(A|IX)$ (where A= action, I=information, X=general knowledge) is viewed differently by the SST office and the environmentalists. The environmentalists simply do not trust the technologists to ever act responsibly on information which indicates environmental hazard when and if such information comes to light. It's really quite obvious when a tree diagram is drawn. Alas, I don't think I can make people see the problem through the trees!

(4) No comment on the nerve gas issue, it's outside my ken.

Ron Howard is doing a job for me which really should interest you.

Sincerely,


Myron Tribus

Enclosures